



Sexual Health Education

— Scope and Sequence —

A sexual health education scope and sequence identifies what students should know and when it should be taught for each grade or grade group to lower students' risk of HIV, STD, and teen pregnancy. The scope and sequence is an essential part of the curriculum framework and serves as a guide for curriculum directors, administrators, teachers, parents, and school board members.

Why is a scope and sequence important?

Even if a district already has a scope and sequence it should be revisited regularly since health education policies, curriculum science, and student health needs change over time. Using a systematic process to create or revise a scope and sequence ensures that the limited time available for health education is used efficiently and is focused on the most critical knowledge and skills for that particular student body. A well-crafted scope and sequence makes it much easier for a district to select a curriculum that matches their needs.

A sexual health education scope and sequence should:

- Correspond with national, state, or local health education standards, benchmarks, and requirements;
- Correspond with the state health education framework;
- Reflect locally identified health priorities;
- Show an awareness of students' developmental needs;
- Address the concepts and skills students need to successfully prevent HIV, STD, and teen pregnancy;
- Exhibit appropriate sequencing within a standard and across grades pre-K-12;
- Balance content appropriately across grades; and
- Show reinforcement of skills and concepts.

What elements are included in a scope and sequence?

A scope and sequence is usually represented in a multi-page table or matrix. Essential elements include:

- Key health education topic(s);
- Grade groups (e.g., Pre-K – 2, 3 – 5) or individual grade levels (e.g., K, 1);
- Desired healthy behavior outcomes (HBOs); and
- Specific knowledge and skill expectations, aligned with the health topic and grade group or level, that become more complex as grade level increases.

How do you develop a scope and sequence?

Getting Ready

1. Pull together a group, facilitated by an experienced and knowledgeable leader, such as a school health coordinator. Actively engage members with knowledge and experience in curriculum development, sexual health education, and the sexual health needs of youth.
2. Ensure that the group understands standards, requirements, data that define community priorities, and the amount of instructional time available for sexual health education. Consult CDC's Health Education Curriculum Analysis Tool (HECAT) which lists the National Health Education Standards, identifies expected healthy behavior outcomes (HBOs), and identifies the essential knowledge and skill expectations directly related to each HBO by standard and grade group.

Choose & Prioritize Goals

3. Select and prioritize HBOs based on this information, and decide which HBOs to address at each grade level.
4. Identify the essential knowledge students should learn to meet the HBOs and choose 1-2 skills to be taught in sexual health at each grade group. Keep in mind that every skill does not have to be taught in every health topic for students to learn how to apply all the skills.

Review & Validate

5. Review the scope and sequence to ensure that skills build progressively, students will have time to develop skills, and the HBOs, knowledge, and skills to be learned at each grade level are appropriate for the students and community.

Next Steps

6. Use the validated scope and sequence as a guide to develop a health education curriculum and to select appropriate and aligned sexual health education curriculum materials.
7. Establish a plan to help teachers implement the scope and sequence. This plan may include ongoing professional development and support.

HECAT Healthy Behavior Outcomes (HBOs) for sexual health

- HBO 1: Establish and maintain healthy relationships.
- HBO 2: Be sexually abstinent
- HBO 3: Engage in behaviors that prevent or reduce sexually transmitted disease (STD), including HIV infection.
- HBO 4: Engage in behaviors that prevent or reduce unintended pregnancy.
- HBO 5: Avoid pressuring others to engage in sexual behaviors.
- HBO 6: Support others to avoid or reduce sexual risk behaviors.
- HBO 7: Treat others with courtesy and respect without regard to their sexuality.
- HBO 8: Use appropriate health services to promote sexual health.



For More Information

Division of Adolescent and School Health
National Center for HIV/AIDS, Viral Hepatitis, STD, and TB Prevention
Centers for Disease Control and Prevention
www.cdc.gov/healthyyouth
1-800-CDC-INFO